

THEN

In 1982, if they were lucky, Airmen on a downward spiral wound up at the 3320th Corrections and Rehabilitation Squadron at Lowry Air Force Base, Colo. Instead of facing prison time at Leavenworth, they encountered helping professionals such as 1st Lt. Martha Davis, a staff clinical social worker and treatment team chief.

Her job was to help rehabilitate enlisted Airmen who had been court-martialed, and the Youngsville, N.C., native did so with great success — about half returned to duty and about 90 percent of those performed as well or better than their peers.

“It was rewarding to see them learn from their bad choices and turn their lives around,” said now-Col. Martha Davis, director of the Biomedical Sciences Corps in the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C.

Colonel Davis knew early in life she wanted to be in “some type of helping profession.” After receiving a bachelor’s in psychology and sociology and a master’s in social work, she was working as a counselor at a North Carolina state prison in 1981 when she accepted a direct commission as a first lieutenant. With only two weeks of formal military training under her belt before reporting to Lowry, Colonel Davis credits security forces noncommissioned officers for teaching her “how to march and make it in the Air Force.”

In fulfilling one of her early goals to see the world, the colonel has held numerous related counseling positions in Washington, Germany, New York, North Carolina, Virginia and Texas, the past 24 years. It’s been a career highlighted by developing lifelong friendships and working alongside high-caliber health care professionals. Perhaps owing to her early positive experience with and respect for enlisted Airmen, the colonel said being a chief would be high on her list if she had her military career to do over. New career goals lie ahead when she retires this summer to pursue seminary school and become a chaplain in a hospital setting.

— Master Sgt. Chuck Roberts

by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi



NOW